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Bureau of Railway
Economics...

The American newspaper
publishers' association...

[Washington, D.C.]

[1913]

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Box 19

**The American Newspaper
Publishers' Association**
and the
Bureau of Railway Economics

30 May 1913

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 30, 1913.

To the Newspaper Press,

GENTLEMEN:

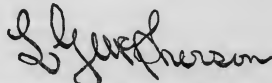
That there may be no misunderstanding as to the intent of the Bureau of Railway Economics, its Director begs to call to your attention a letter written to Mr. L. B. Palmer, Manager of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, under date of March 22, 1913, which is printed herewith, together with his reply under date of March 28th. You will note that the letter to Mr. Palmer expresses sympathy with the efforts to relieve the reading columns of newspapers of free advertising, and points out that the publications of the Bureau of Railway Economics cannot be considered as advertising.

The Bureau of Railway Economics was established by railways of the United States for the purpose of ascertaining and presenting exact facts in regard to the economic relations of the railways. It is enjoined to be absolutely impartial, to suppress nothing bearing upon any subject which it undertakes to investigate. The adherence to this program throughout the two and one-half years of its existence is token of its sincerity. The Bureau is forbidden to engage in polemic and partisan discussion. Its purpose first and foremost is to be a source of accurate and authentic information in regard to the railways.

No newspaper publisher or editor to whom this position has been stated, or who has read this correspondence with Mr. Palmer, has said that the Bureau transgresses any principle of journalistic ethics in making the information ascertained by it available to editors for such consideration as they may see fit to give it.

The Bureau has under way studies of questions of paramount importance not only to the railways but to the whole people. In the same spirit of fairness which has actuated all of its procedure it will continue to make the results of these studies available to the press, which certainly does not desire to be other than fair in the treatment of such questions.

Yours truly,



Director of the Bureau of
Railway Economics.

Copy.

BUREAU OF RAILWAY ECONOMICS.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 27, 1913.

Mr. L. B. Palmer,

Manager, American Newspaper

Publishers Association,

World Building, N. Y.

DEAR SIR:

The other day I was given a copy of the little travesty entitled "The Hard-Hearted Editor." I read it with interest as well as amusement and expressed appreciation of the situation. Then I was told that you were the writer and that it cast a sidelight upon the efforts your Association is making to prevent certain abuses in newspaper publication.

It is a gratification to me that this Bureau has not in any way transgressed the principles which you expound and defend.

The railways of the United States are admittedly a quasi-public institution and as such their affairs are continually discussed in the press. The ultimate status of the railways of this country cannot but be determined by the facts which underlie their relations to the public, to their patrons, to their employees, to the investors in their stocks and securities, and to the Government. The Bureau of Railway Economics was established to aid in the elucidation of these facts. In this it is thought to be performing a service not only to the railways which established it and who desire to know the facts, but to the public in general which certainly does not want to be guided by other than the facts.

The Bureau sends to editors throughout the United States copies of its monthly summaries of revenues and expenses of the railways, and of the bulletins containing the results of special studies, together with a "proof slip" condensation of the salient points of each bulletin, always stating that the matter is "for their information, their reference, and their publication if they so desire." The dissemination of these facts is evidence of the willingness of the railways to make public the intimate details of their public relations. This is not seeking "free publicity." It is but conforming to

the demand of the times that there shall be no secrecy in corporate administration.

The Bureau has been enjoined to be entirely scientific in its procedure, to be absolutely impartial in the ascertainment and expression of exact fact. It offers its record of two and one-half years as evidence that it strictly adheres to this program.

Statements in regard to the affairs of the railways as a quasi-public institution made by members of the legislatures, of railroad commissions, representatives of shippers associations, and officers of railway brotherhoods, are frequently published and commented upon in the general press without any thought on the part of newspaper proprietors that advertising space should be used or advertising rates paid. In view of this I can see no reason why information emanating from an organization accredited by the railways and pledged to accuracy should not be received by newspaper editors and correspondents for such consideration as they may care to give it. I have advanced these views to a number of newspaper men and they have never been gained.

I repeat that the Bureau does not request any editor to publish the information compiled and disseminated by it. This information is furnished to the railways and is also made available to the newspapers. But it rather goes without saying that to the extent that these statements appeal to editors as of public interest and suitable for publication and comment the Bureau will be glad to have that publication and comment. It invites challenge of the accuracy of any statement made by it. These statements are always of a general character and never in the specific interest of any particular railway. The publications of the Bureau are invariably the result of careful and often of prolonged study. They are verified and reverified and nearly always embody information compiled for the first time and not elsewhere made available.

With the renewed assurance of my sympathy with your efforts to rid the newspapers of the misuse of their reading columns, I am,

Yours very truly,

(Signed) L. G. McPHERSON,
Director of the Bureau.

Copy.

AMERICAN NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS
ASSOCIATION,

WORLD BUILDING, NEW YORK.

MARCH 28, 1913.

*Mr. L. G. McPherson,
Bureau of Railway Economics,
Washington, D. C.*

DEAR SIR:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of March 27th and am very glad to note that you are in sympathy with our efforts to rid the news columns of inspired matter and also that your bureau does not request any editor to publish any matter compiled by or disseminated by it.

If a woman jumps from a burning building into the arms of a waiting fireman, she may not request him to break her fall and yet possibly it would not be stretching the truth to assume the request, and likewise we assume request for publication to be made by those who contribute matter for free publication in the news columns.

Possibly the attached notice which we publish in the bulletins from time to time will further explain the purpose of our work.

Very truly yours,

L. B. PALMER,
Manager.

NOTICE!

It is not the purpose of these bulletins to attempt to distinguish between such matter as may be properly classed as news and others that are obvious attempts to secure free use of the advertising columns for strictly commercial purposes.

All matter that is sent to members for free publication and forwarded to us is listed, and when possible the source and the motive of the contribution receive comment, but all that is published in the Bulletin is offered in the belief that publishers and editors will themselves determine which of the many items, if any, are available for use in their columns.

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